

Dear GCEA members,

May 7, 2009

Below is a letter written by Sharon Long, Camden County Council of Educators' President-our sister county. Camden County Freeholders are attempting to interfere with collective bargaining in Camden County. Please read the letter, and stay alert for more information and plans.

Thank you for your support!

Marie Blistan, President-Gloucester County Education Association

Dear CCCEA member,

Your salary and benefits are under attack by Camden County's Freeholders. CCCEA and NJEA are organizing to make sure they don't succeed in undermining our right to bargain with local board of education – and we need your help.

For at least a couple of years, the Freeholders have been pursuing a campaign to minimize salaries and reduce benefits for county employees. Now, they are trying to impose their will on local school districts even though they have no legal authority to do so and make no financial contribution to the districts.

In February, Freeholder Director Louis Cappelli, Jr. sent a letter, on his Freeholder letterhead, to every school district in Camden County, offering the Freeholders' assistance in "dealing with tough bargaining unions" and "mirroring our efforts at the local level."

We are organizing to send a simple message to the Freeholders: "In these challenging economic times, don't attack the security of middle-class Camden County residents. We live here. We raise our families here. We vote here. We pay taxes here. Don't turn to us to solve problems we did not cause."

The Freeholders are counting on the economic crisis to shield them away from criticism for their unwarranted interference in local negotiations. We are going to make sure they hear from Camden County voters who think this is exactly the wrong time to take a swipe at working class families.

We'll be reaching out to you again with specific actions you can take to stand against this attack on our bargaining process and the benefits we work so hard to earn. I hope we can count on you to stand up for your own rights and those of you Camden County colleagues.

In solidarity,

Sharon Long, President
Camden County Council of Education Associations